

improved ; in 1673 the Duke of York was deprived of the post of Lord High Admiral by the Test Act; in 1679 Mr. Pepys was removed from the Secretaryship of the Admiralty on the suspicion of popery. The board of experts to whom Pepys had been secretary was replaced by a board of politicians selected for their popularity and their influence in Parliament. It was under this board, which lasted from 1679 to 1684, that the navy sank into the condition which Macaulay describes.<sup>1</sup>

In May 1684, Charles II dismissed this incompetent board and took the government of the navy into his own hands, with the advice and assistance of the Duke of York. ' His Majesty ', wrote James to the Prince of Orange<sub>3</sub> ' declared at the Cabinetcouncil that he thought it for his service to recalle the Commission of the Admiralty and, without making me admiral, to lett me have the managing of it.'<sup>2</sup> On June 10, 1684, Pepys was appointed Secretary for the Affairs of the Admiralty of England ' by letters patent and set to work to reform the administration. On his recommendation, a special commission ( for the recover}' of the navy ' was named in April 1686, and during the next two and a half years put the ships into thorough repair and reorganised the dockyards. The story of the decay and the restoration of the navy is told by Pepys in a

vindication of his administration which he published in

<sup>1</sup>\* If the naval administrations of the period from the Restoration to the Revolution are viewed as a whole, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that they are not quite as black as they have been painted . . . except during the period 1679 to 1684 there was no abject incompetence, and something was effected from time to time in the way of solid reform/ A Descriptive Catalogue of the Naval Manuscripts in the Pepysian Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge, ed. J. R. Tanner, i (Publications of the Navy Records Society, vol. **xxvi**; 1903), 244-5.

<sup>2</sup>G. Groen van Prinsterer, Archives ou correspondance inedite de la Maison d'Orange-Nassau, Ser. II, vol. v (1861), 586.